

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Romano Prodi of Italy in Strelna

July 15, 2006

President Bush. I've enjoyed my visit with the Prime Minister, Romano. I've known him for a long time. This isn't the first time we have had discussions, and so therefore, the discussions today were very cordial. They reflect the important relationship that the United States shares with Italy.

Before I say anything beyond this, I do want to congratulate your great country for winning the World Cup.

Prime Minister Prodi. I am happy to—

President Bush. I bet you are happy for it. And we were very excited for the Italian people as they celebrated the magnificent victory.

Romano and I talked about a lot of issues that face the world. No question, when Italy and the United States works together, along with other countries, we're able to achieve important breakthroughs. We talked about Iran; we talked about the Middle East; we talked about a variety of issues. We talked about energy; we spent a lot of time talking about energy.

I want to thank you for your time, thank you for your frank discussions. It's good to see you again.

Prime Minister Prodi. I hope that we can meet sometime again.

President Bush. Yes, sir, thank you.

Prime Minister Prodi. I confirm what George told—we had a very frank conversation concerning all that—[inaudible]—issues. But now—[inaudible]—first of all, Middle East, of course, then Iran and Iraq and Afghanistan. Then we spent a lot of time on the future. I think we—[inaudible]—for Africa—[inaudible]. There's certainly a vision between U.S. and Italy—[inaudible]—and our friendship is stronger, Mr. President.

President Bush. Yes, sir. Thank you, Romano.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:44 p.m. in Cottage Nine at the Konstantinovsky Palace Complex. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters in Strelna

July 16, 2006

President Bush. It's good to be here with my friend and our close ally. We just had a wide-ranging discussion. We talked about the Middle East; we talked about Iraq; we talked about Iran. I was pleased to inform and thank Tony for the good work in the United Nations on a unanimous resolution regarding North Korea.

We talked about trade. We're both committed to a world that trades freely. All in all, it's a typical Blair-Bush conversation—it was wide-ranging and conclusive. And I appreciate your insight and your thoughts.

Prime Minister Blair. Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. The President has indicated to you the subjects we discussed. And we went through basically all of the international agenda, as evidence of a very strong common agreement on the key questions.

President Bush. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Situation in the Middle East

Q. Israel's offensive in Lebanon appears to have no end in sight at this point. Are you willing to go along with Lebanon's call for a ceasefire?

President Bush. One of the interesting things about this recent flareup is that it helps clarify a root cause of instability in the Middle East—and that's Hizballah and Hizballah's relationship with Syria and Hizballah's relationship to Iran and Syria's relationship to Iran. Therefore, in order to solve this problem, it's really important for the world to address the root cause.

We, of course, are in continued discussions with Israel. All sovereign nations have the right to defend themselves against terrorist attacks. However, we hope that there is restraint as people respond. And one of our concerns, of course, is the fragile democracy in Lebanon. So in order to solve this problem, the international community must address the root causes, otherwise there may